



Defense Health Agency

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION

NUMBER 105
March 29, 2019

OGC

SUBJECT: Conference Attendance Review and Approval Procedures

References: See Enclosure 1.


1. PURPOSE. This Defense Health Agency-Administrative Instruction (DHA-AI), based on the authority of References (a) and (b), and in accordance with the guidance of References (c) through (e), establishes the Defense Health Agency's (DHA) procedures to review and approve conference attendance ensuring responsible stewardship of taxpayer money consistent with the ability to manage professional development. This DHA-AI implements Reference (e), which details how to responsibly manage conference attendance.
2. APPLICABILITY. This DHA-AI applies to all DHA personnel to include: assigned, attached, or detailed Service members, federal civilians, contractors (when required by the terms of the applicable contract), and other personnel assigned temporary or permanent duties at DHA, to include intermediate management organizations, markets, and military medical treatment facilities (MTFs).
3. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION. It is DHA's policy, pursuant to References (d) and (e), that attendance at both DoD-sponsored, or hosted conferences and non-DoD sponsored or hosted conferences be approved by authorities as specified in Reference (e). This process is designed to eliminate undue delays and impediments to appropriate conference participation.
4. RESPONSIBILITIES. See Enclosure 2.
5. PROCEDURES. See Enclosure 3.

6. RELEASABILITY. **Not cleared for public release.** This DHA-AI is available to users with Common Access Card authorization on the DHA SharePoint site at: <https://info.health.mil/cos/admin/pubs/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE. This DHA-AI:

a. Is effective upon signature.

b. Will expire 10 years from the date of signature if it has not been reissued or cancelled before this date in accordance with DHA-Procedural Instruction 5025.01 (Reference (c)).



R. C. BONO
VADM, MC, USN
Director

Enclosures

1. References
2. Responsibilities
3. Procedures

Glossary

ENCLOSURE 1

REFERENCES

- (a) DoD Directive 5136.01, “Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs (ASD(HA)),” September 30, 2013, as amended
- (b) DoD Directive 5136.13, “Defense Health Agency (DHA),” September 30, 2013
- (c) DHA-Procedural Instruction 5025.01, “Publication System,” August 24, 2018
- (d) OMB Memorandum, Subject: Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations, May 11, 2012
- (e) ODCMO Memorandum, Subject: Department of Defense Conference Guidance, Version 4.0, June 26, 2016
- (f) Code of Federal Regulations, Title 5, Part 410.404
- (g) DoD Instruction 5105.04, “Department of Defense Federal Advisory Committee Management Program,” August 6, 2007
- (h) DoD Directive 5015.2, “DoD Records Management Program,” February 24, 2015

ENCLOSURE 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. DIRECTOR, DHA. The Director, DHA, will review all conferences with net expenses to DoD in excess of \$100,000. For conferences with net expenses more than \$100,000 and not more than \$500,000, the Director, DHA, also has approval authority in regard to these same conferences as well as DoD sponsored or hosted conferences with a total cost of \$100,000 or less.

2. THE COMMANDERS/DIRECTORS OF THE MILITARY MTFs. Under the authority, direction, and control the Director, DHA, the commanders/directors of the military MTFs who sponsor or host a conference with a total cost of \$100,000 or less will be responsible for approving such conferences.

3. OFFICIALS AND APPROVING AUTHORITIES. Officials and approving authorities at least one level above the supervisors with normal Temporary Duty/Temporary Additional Duty (provided they are at the grade of O-5, General Schedule-14 or equivalent) will be responsible for approving non-DoD sponsored or hosted conferences of \$100,000 or less estimated to cost \$3,000 or more per attendee or \$600 or more per day per civilian employee or military member.

4. SUPERVISORS. Supervisors with normal Temporary Duty/Temporary Additional Duty approval authority will be responsible for approving non-DoD sponsored or hosted conferences of \$100,000 or less estimated to cost less than \$3,000 per attendee and less than \$600 per day per civilian employee or military member.

ENCLOSURE 3

PROCEDURES

1. DETERMINATION OF A CONFERENCE

a. A conference is defined as, a meeting, retreat, seminar, symposium, or event involving attendee travel. The term “conference” also applies to training activities considered to be conferences in accordance with Reference (f).

b. Conferences subject to this guidance are also referred to by names other than “conference.” They typically involve topical matters of interest to, and the participation of multiple agencies and or non-governmental participants.

c. Events within the local travel area that do not require travel authorization may also qualify as a conference.

d. The types of activities listed below should not be considered conferences even if the event meets the general definition of a conference. This determination must be made by the Director, DHA, or at a higher level and will be granted only when events fully meet the definition and the intent of this criteria:

- (1) Meetings necessary to carry out statutory command and staff oversight functions.
- (2) Meetings to consider internal agency business matters.
- (3) Meetings necessary to carry out planning or execution of operational or operational activities or pre-deployment, deployment or post-deployment activities.
- (4) Bi-lateral and multi-lateral international cooperation engagements.
- (5) Formal classroom training.
- (6) Change of command, official military award, funeral, or other such ceremonies.
- (7) Events where the primary purpose is recruiting.
- (8) Meetings of advisory committees subject to Reference (g).

2. DETERMINATION OF CONFERENCE COSTS

a. Conference Expenses. The expenses of a conference includes but is not limited to the following:

(1) Authorized travel and per diem expenses for all DoD sponsored attendees, including both government and non-government attendees.

(2) Hire of rooms for official business.

(3) Audiovisual and other equipment usage.

(4) Computer and telephone access fees.

(5) Light refreshments and other food and beverage.

(6) Printing.

(7) Registration, exhibitor, sponsor and conference fees for all DoD sponsored attendees, including both government and non-government attendees.

(8) Ground transportation and/or parking fees.

(9) Outlays for conference preparation and planning.

(10) Speaker Fees.

(11) Administrative Expenses.

b. Conference expenses that should not be included.

(1) Federal employee time for conference preparation and planning.

(2) Federal employee time for attendance at the conference or en route.

(3) Security costs to ensure the safety of government officials.

(4) While the DoD determines a feasible way to accurately capture these costs, contractor attendance costs charged to a contract not associated with the hosting or running of the conference.

(5) Revenue is all direct or indirect conference costs collected or reimbursed to DoD by non-DoD entities, including but not limited to registration, exhibitor and sponsor fees collected.

(6) Total conference costs should be the net value of the conference expenses, less fees or revenue received. For DoD-sponsored or hosted conferences it must be calculated by the hosting component and must include funds paid by all DoD components, not just the host.

3. REPORTING. In accordance with requirements of Reference (e), the Director, DHA, will after validation report annually through the DoD Conference Tool detailed information concerning conferences it hosts where the total expenses are in excess of \$100,000. Also to be reported using that tool, within 15 days of the conference being held, by the official approving the conference is less detailed information (name, date location and number of DoD personnel attending) associated with DoD hosted conferences where expenses are in excess of \$20,000. The tool can be found at the following link:
<https://eitsdext.osd.mil/sites/DoDConferenceTool/Pages/home.aspx>.

4. LEGAL COMPLIANCE. Approval authorities are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and policies in making their approvals and therefore should consult with legal counsel, when appropriate.

5. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT. Approval authorities must maintain electronic records of documentation used in making their decisions for not less than 5 years or in accordance with Reference (h).

6. CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE. Conference attendance is subject to a determination by the approving authority that such attendance is appropriately related to the performance of that individual's official duties and the expense of attendance is justified on that basis. When making conference approval decisions, approval officials must confirm the physical co-location of DoD personnel in a conference setting is beneficial and cost effective and consider alternative means of delivering the relevant information, including usage of remote collaboration tools and other real-time communication methods that would mitigate the need for physical co-location of DoD personnel.

7. PROHIBITED CONFERENCE EXPENSES. Entertainment-related expenses are expressly prohibited.

8. GRANTS AND CONTRACTS. Grants or contracts funded by appropriated funds may not be used for the purpose of defraying the costs of a conference not directly and programmatically related to the purpose for which they were awarded.

9. JOINTLY HOSTED CONFERENCES. In the case when more than one DoD unit or organization is hosting a conference jointly, and the total cost will be over \$100,000, one unit or organization will be designated to obtain approval of the conference.

10. ENHANCED SCRUTINY

- a. Any spousal travel must be authorized in accordance with the Joint Travel Regulation.
- b. Conferences co-sponsored with a non-federal entity must be planned in accordance with the guidelines in this DHA-AI, to ensure that no prohibited expenses are involved and that no appearance of government impropriety is created.
- c. While use of conference planners is permitted, approval officials must ensure no prohibited expenses are involved and no appearance of government impropriety is created.

11. APPROVAL TIMING. Organizations should not finalize conference plans or make any commitments to vendors or hotels obligating the government to pay funds until the requisite approval from the appropriate approval authority has been obtained.

12. ESCALATION CIRCUMSTANCES. If, as the date of a DoD-hosted conference approaches, it becomes apparent its total cost will exceed the estimated cost and breach the next approval threshold, approval must be obtained from the higher level approval authority as soon as possible.

13. CONTENT OF CONFERENCE APPROVAL PACKAGES

- a. Dates and location of event.
- b. Draft agenda.
- c. Number of continuing education credits, if offered.
- d. Total cost to attend the conference.
- e. What key strategic goals in the current Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness strategic plan are supported.

GLOSSARY

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DHA	Defense Health Agency
DHA-AI	Defense Health Agency-Administrative Instruction
MTF	medical treatment facility